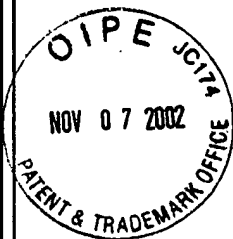


Attorney Docket
33082 M 119



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PATENT

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicants : Hitoshi KATO, et al.
Serial No. : 10/066,627 Art Unit : 2822
Filed : February 6, 2002 Examiner : Maria F. Guerrero
For : Silicon Nitride Film Forming Method, Silicon Nitride Film Forming System and
Silicon Nitride Film Forming System Precleaning Method

RESPONSE TO PAPER NO. 3

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

Sir :

A response to the Restriction Requirement/Species Election (Paper No. 3) mailed October 29, 2002 is due by November 28, 2002. Please accept this Response as timely filed.

Restriction was required among the following two groups of claims:

- Group I of claims 1-3, drawn to an apparatus for forming semiconductor devices, and
- Group II of claims 4-12, drawn to method of manufacturing semiconductor devices.

Applicants hereby elect Group II, claims 4-12 for prosecution in this application.

Paper No. 3 also required that if the claims of Group II were elected, then election of one of two allegedly patentably distinct species included in the claims of Group II must be made. From Paper No. 3, the alleged species are as follows:

- Species I directed to a process for forming a silicon nitride film, and
- Species II directed to a cleaning process.

Applicants elect Species I for prosecution in this application, and advise that claims 7-12 are drawn to a precleaning method.

Applicants submit that all of the inventors of this application are involved in each claim. Accordingly, no change to the inventorship is required.

Applicants reserve the right to file divisional applications to any non-elected claims.

Applicants submit that this patent application is in condition for examination on the merits and early action is that regard earnestly is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

SMITH, GAMBRELL & RUSSELL, LLP



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Date : November 7, 2002